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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions

Proposed revision to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 16. Economic development in Europe

1. At its 17th meeting, on 15 June 1998, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It had before it proposals in respect of programme 16, Economic development in Europe.

2. The Chief of the Regional Commissions New York Office introduced programme 16 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Appreciation was expressed for the proposed revisions, which fully reflected both the ministerial Declaration on the Strengthening of the Economic Cooperation in Europe, adopted in 1997, as well as the ECE Plan of Action. However, it was pointed out that, in the introductory paragraphs of the proposed revisions to programme 16, the so-called "sunset"clause was mentioned. Regret was expressed that such mention was made in a United Nations document by the Secretariat, while the General Assembly itself was still involved in discussing the issue and had yet to decide thereon.

4. Clarification was sought regarding the mandate for the reference to time-frame and sunset clauses. The Committee was informed that these concepts were introduced in the reform package adopted by the Commission and apply only to the ad hoc groups of governmental experts that are established for a two-year period with a precise programme of work. This category of intergovernmental body facilitates the rotation of activities within

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the mandate and areas of expertise of ECE. At the end of the two-year period, new requests from member States can thus be addressed through the establishment of new ad hoc groups of experts, while not inflating the intergovernmental structure of the Commission.

5. In response to a question on the type of cooperation between European and North African States, the Committee was informed that a general concern of ECE was to make its integration tools (mainly norms and standards) available to countries outside the region, notably the Mediterranean countries (both Middle East and North African). For example, some ECE norms and conventions in the field of transport had been adopted by a number of those countries. ECE also cooperates with them in the fields of trade facilitation and energy (gas). In addition, ECE, jointly with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is responsible for the implementation of the Economic and Social Council resolution on the Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed revisions to programme 16 of the medium-term plan, subject to the following modification:

Paragraph 16.1

In the first sentence, *replace* European *with* member.